

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 03010

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PGOV WB GW UR SOPN

SUBJECT: WORLD SPEED SKATING MEET IN BERLIN: SOVIET
POLITICIZING OF INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS

REFS: (A) USBER 328;

BEGIN SUMMARY. IN BOYCOTTING THE WORLD SPEED SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS IN WEST BERLIN, THE SOVIETS ARE FURTHERING THEIR LONG-RANGE GOALS WITH REGARD TO THE CITY BY LESSENING ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS MOVE SHOULD GO UNNOTICED BY WORLD OPINION. ANY FURTHER PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT ON THE RFE-RL INNSBRUCK ACCREDITATION ISSUE MIGHT APPROPRIATELY REFER ALSO TO THE BOYCOTT OF THE BERLIN SPEED SKATING MEET AS AN ADDITIONAL EXAMPLE OF SOVIET EFFORTS TO POLITICIZE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS. END SUMMARY.

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1. BERLIN REFTTEL, REPORTING THE APPARENTLY FINAL SOVIET DECISION TO BOYCOTT THE MARCH 6-7 WORLD SPEED SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS, TENDS TO CONFIRM SUSPICIONS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE NOT SO MUCH CONCERNED WITH THE MODALITIES OF ISSUING INVITATIONS AS WITH PREVENTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BERLIN AS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER.

2. THE SOVIETS HAVE SCORED A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY. IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT, WITHOUT THE SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN SKATERS, THE MEET WILL NOT TRULY BE AN WORLD EVENT. IT SEEMS JUST AS OBVIOUS THAT INTERNATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS WILL IN THE FUTURE SHY AWAY FROM THE POLITICAL CONTROVERSY WHICH WOULD FLOW FROM ACCEPTING INVITATIONS TO SCHEDULE MEETS IN BERLIN.

3. WHAT THE SOVIETS WERE IN EFFECT DEMANDING, THROUGH INSISTING ON THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE QUADRIpartite AGREEMENT, WAS THAT THE SKATING MEET BE PRESENTED AS SOMETHING HOSTED INDEPENDENTLY BY BERLIN OR BERLINERS AND NOT BY THE FRG. THERE WAS STUBBORNNESS ON THE GERMAN SIDE, TO BE SURE, AND IT MAY WELL BE THAT THE GERMANS BACKED AWAY FROM OR WERE UNABLE TO OBTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH, WHATEVER IT WAS THEY AGREED TO WITH THE SOVIETS IN 1973 FOR THE HANDLING OF INVITATIONS TO NON-OFFICIAL EVENTS. BUT THE SOVIETS UNDOUBTEDLY UNDERSTAND THAT BERLIN CHAPTERS OF FRG SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS ARE NOT INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS AND HAVE NO STANDING ON THEIR OWN TO INVITE WORLD BODIES TO MEET IN BERLIN. BY INSISTING ON SUCH INVITATIONS, OR DEMANDING AS SEEMED TO BE THE CASE WITH THE SKATING EVENT THAT THE SENAT ALSO INVITE, THE SOVIETS ARE IN EFFECT QUESTIONING -- WITH SOME SUCCESS-- THE ABILITY TO HOLD NON-OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL EVENTS IN BERLIN.

4. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS EFFORT SHOULD BE COMPLETELY COST-FREE TO THE SOVIETS. SHOULD THE DEPARTMENT PLAN ANY FURTHER COMMENT ON THE SOVIET SUCCESS IN FORCING THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO WITHDRAW THE

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CREDENTIALS OF RADIO FREE EUROPE AND RADIO LIBERTY CORRESPONDENTS AT INNSBRUCK, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO WORK IN AS WELL A REFERENCE TO THE BOYCOTT OF THE BERLIN SKATING MEET AS AN ADDITIONAL EXAMPLE OF MOSCOW'S HEAVY-HANDED POLITICIZING OF INTERNATIONAL SPORTS.
HILLENBRAND

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